



Towards the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in South Asia

Proceedings of the South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the
Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale
Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication

23–26 November 2015
Colombo, Sri Lanka



Cover photograph:
©FAO/Prakash Singh

Towards the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in South Asia

Proceedings of the South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication

**23–26 November 2015
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Edited by

Nicole Franz

Fishery Planning Analyst
FAO, Rome, Italy

Florence Poulain

Fishery and Aquaculture Officer
FAO, Rome, Italy

Lena Westlund

FAO Consultant
Stockholm, Sweden

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO.

ISBN 978-92-5-109741-0

© FAO, 2017

FAO encourages the use, reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product. Except where otherwise indicated, material may be copied, downloaded and printed for private study, research and teaching purposes, or for use in non-commercial products or services, provided that appropriate acknowledgement of FAO as the source and copyright holder is given and that FAO's endorsement of users' views, products or services is not implied in any way.

All requests for translation and adaptation rights, and for resale and other commercial use rights should be made via www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request or addressed to copyright@fao.org.

FAO information products are available on the FAO website (www.fao.org/publications) and can be purchased through publications-sales@fao.org.

This publication has been printed using selected products and processes so as to ensure minimal environmental impact and to promote sustainable forest management.

Preparation of this document

This document provides a summary of the presentations, discussions, conclusions and recommendations from the South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 23 to 26 November 2015. The report was prepared by Nicole Franz, Florence Poulain and Lena Westlund.

The workshop was organized by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department in partnership with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of Sri Lanka, with financial support from the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project and the Government of Norway.

The material included in the annexes from the working group discussions is reproduced as submitted.

Abstract

Following the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in June 2014, and in line with paragraph 13.6 of the document itself referring to promoting the development of regional plans of action, a regional workshop was held in South Asia to discuss the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

The South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 23 to 26 November 2015. It was organized by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department in partnership with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of Sri Lanka, with financial support from the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project and the Government of Norway. The workshop was attended by a total of 49 participants from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Maldives and Sri Lanka, including representatives of governments, regional and international organizations, fisherfolk organizations, civil society organization (CSOs), NGOs, academia and other relevant actors, as well as FAO staff and resource persons.

The overall objective of the workshop was to raise awareness and support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the region. The workshop noted that small-scale fisheries contribute to livelihoods, food security, and local and regional economies across the region. There are encouraging developments in the region concerning legal reforms, strengthening participation of small-scale fisheries actors and co-management approaches. On the other hand, many challenges persist, including heavily exploited fishery resources in coastal areas, poor infrastructure facilities and services, increased risks from disasters and climate change, competition from other sectors, and the insufficient operationalization of fisheries management plans and institutionalization of the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) in national fisheries governance frameworks. There is therefore a strong need to move from theory to practice and to link policy to actions, in the spirit of the SSF Guidelines.

FAO. 2017. Towards the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in South Asia. Proceedings of the South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, by Nicole Franz, Florence Poulain and Lena Westlund. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Proceedings No. 57. Rome, Italy.

Contents

Preparation of this document	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vii
Abbreviations and acronyms	viii
Executive summary	ix
Introduction	1
DAY 1	3
Workshop opening session	3
Workshop objectives, expected outputs and modus operandi	4
Keynote presentations	5
A CSO perspective on SSF Guidelines implementation in South Asia	5
A Regional Perspective: The BOBLME project and the SSF Guidelines implementation	5
Country presentations	7
Sri Lanka	7
Bangladesh	8
Maldives	9
India	10
Summary of presentations and discussion of Day 1	10
DAYS 2 and 3	13
Additional thematic presentations	13
Southeast Asia experience and future plans with regard to SSF Guidelines implementation	13
Women and small-scale fisheries: Bangladesh perspective	14
Climate change and disaster risks	15
Addressing voids in research: small-scale fisheries	16
Fisherwomen of Eastern India: Struggling for self-sufficiency, problems and prospects	16
Summary of plenary discussion	17
Working group sessions	19
Working group arrangements	19
Working group session 1: Agreeing on priorities	19
Working group session 2: Sharing good practice	19
Working group session 3: Action planning	19

DAY 4	23
Summary conclusions, recommendations and the way forward	23
Closing session	24
APPENDIX 1: Workshop agenda	25
APPENDIX 2: List of participants	27
APPENDIX 3: Working group distribution	31
APPENDIX 4: Final results of the working group sessions	33

Acknowledgements

The South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security benefited enormously from the dedicated contributions of a large number of individuals. All of them are gratefully acknowledged for their efforts during preparations for, as well as throughout, the workshop.

The FAO Representation in Sri Lanka, Giuseppe Bronzoni, acting FAO Representative, and his staff provided invaluable support to the meeting. Their generous and efficient collaboration is gratefully acknowledged. Sincere thanks are due to the members of the FAO SSF Task Force for their support during preparations for the regional consultation.

The organizers are particularly grateful to the chairpersons of the workshop sessions, the presenters and to all workshop participants for their active engagement during the workshop discussions.

Finally, the organizers extend their sincerest thanks to the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) and the Government of Norway for their financial contributions to this event.

Abbreviations and acronyms

BOBLME	Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem
BOBP-IGO	Bay of Bengal Programme – Intergovernmental Organization
CBO	Community-based organisation
CMFRI	Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (Kochi, India)
COFI	Committee on Fisheries (FAO)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EAF	Ecosystem approach to fisheries
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ENSO	El Niño–Southern Oscillation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICSF	International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
ICT	Information and communication technology
ID card	Identity card
ILO	International Labour Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LME	Large marine Ecosystem
MFF	Mangroves for the Future (IUCN)
MMAF	Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (Indonesia)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPOA	National Plan of Action
SAAPE	South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SACEP	South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme
SAM	Special Area Management (Sri Lanka)
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SCZMC	SAARC Coastal Zone Management Centre
SEAFDEC	Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Center
SSF	Small-scale fisheries
SSF Guidelines	Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
UNCLOS	Convention on the Law of the Sea
WFFP	World Forum of Fisher People

Executive summary

INTRODUCTION

The South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 23 to 26 November 2015, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project for Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. It was co-hosted by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of Sri Lanka, and additional financial support was provided by the Government of Norway. The workshop was attended by 49 participants, including representatives of governments, regional and international organizations, fisherfolk organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia and other relevant actors.

The overall objective of the workshop was to raise awareness and support the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) in the region. Over 3.5 days, participants examined the current status of small-scale fisheries in the region, shared experiences through country and topical presentations and discussions, and proposed action to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines at the regional and national level.

Across the region, small-scale fisheries contribute to livelihoods, food security, and local and regional economies. In Bangladesh inland fisheries play a key role, while marine capture fisheries are dominant in Maldives. In all four countries the majority of fishers and fishworkers are employed in the small-scale fishery sector.

There are encouraging developments in the region concerning legal reforms, strengthening participation of small-scale fisheries actors and co-management approaches. On the other hand, many challenges persist, including heavily exploited fishery resources in coastal areas, poor infrastructure and services, increased risks from disasters and climate change, competition from other sectors. There is also an insufficient operationalization of fisheries management plans and the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) has not been institutionalized as part of national fisheries governance frameworks. There is therefore a strong need to move from theory to practice and to link policy to actions, in the spirit of the SSF Guidelines.

The comprehensiveness of the SSF Guidelines was acknowledged and the need to take a holistic and human-rights-based approach to small-scale fisheries governance and development was stressed. Efforts are required to ensure that there is a common understanding of how to apply a human-rights-based approach in the context of small-scale fisheries.

The workshop recognized that the implementation of the SSF Guidelines should be anchored at the local and national levels, but that regional attention and support would also be required to address transboundary fisheries-related issues. There are also opportunities for regional collaboration, in particular with regard to information exchange and capacity development. The contribution of the BOBLME project's first phase to support small-scale fisheries was appreciated. The inclusion of activities in relation to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines at the regional and national level in the draft BOBLME Strategic Action Programme — which is the basis of the proposed second phase — was welcomed.

The workshop also learned about the recent Southeast Asia Regional Consultation Workshop on the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, hosted by the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia in collaboration with FAO, and supported by BOBLME and the Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), including the steps taken by Indonesia to develop a National Plan of Action for small-scale fisheries and the country's initiative to develop a Regional Plan of Action.

OUTCOMES OF WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Key priority areas of action proposed by the workshop, to be considered further in national and regional implementation planning processes, included:

GOVERNANCE OF TENURE IN SSF AND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (CHAPTER 5 OF THE SSF GUIDELINES)

- The representation of small-scale fisheries actors in decision-making, including women and marginalized groups, needs to be strengthened. Small-scale fisheries communities should be empowered to participate in aquatic resources management and benefit from socio-economic development. National- and local-level multi-stakeholder platforms, management committees and community-based organizations (CBOs) should be given responsibility through co-management arrangements. Capacity development for participatory management (ecosystem approach to fisheries – EAF), including legal aspects, is needed – both for government officials and community representatives.
- Multi-tier platforms for joint management are needed at the regional level for the management of shared resources, e.g. by Sri Lanka and India, and by India and Bangladesh. Regional and bilateral arrangements should be supported and facilitated by regional organizations and projects, e.g. the Bay of Bengal Programme – Intergovernmental Organization (BOBP-IGO) and the proposed second phase of the BOBLME project. Governments should also ask these and other relevant regional bodies, through their respective governing structures, to assist in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, e.g. the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Coastal Zone Management Centre (SCZMC), the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) and the IUCN Mangroves for the Future (MFF).
- Mechanisms for effective and meaningful consultations with communities, including consultative committees at the district, state and national level (as appropriate) and regular visits to fishing communities by policy-makers, should be set up by fisheries administrations and other relevant government authorities.
- There is a need to legalise legitimate customary tenure rights to both fishery and land resources. Efforts should be made (by CSOs and academia/researchers) to identify and document such rights and to advocate for their recognition by governments. Likewise, cases where small-scale fisheries communities are threatened or affected by the loss of land to other sectors need to be documented, and legal protection and support provided.
- Human rights violations should be identified, documented and addressed through collaboration including fisheries-sector stakeholders and national human rights commissions. Governments should ensure that international human rights conventions, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, are applied in cases of transboundary and migrant small-scale fisheries activities. CSOs, academia/researchers and the media have a role to play in drawing attention to, and raising awareness of, human rights violations.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK AND GENDER EQUALITY (CHAPTERS 6 AND 8 OF THE SSF GUIDELINES)

- Human capacities of small-scale fisheries stakeholders at all levels should be developed, as a precondition to implementing holistic approaches (e.g. EAF). This needs to be strengthened by long-term financial support for small-scale fisheries. An important action, already partly initiated in the region, is the provision of ID cards for small-scale fisherfolk to facilitate access to services. Women require special attention in terms of skill development and start-up support. Overall, the sector requires the identification and development of permanent/temporary diversification of income-generating activities. Improved socio-economic information, provided by fishing communities (e.g. through the use of ICT) is also key to informing human capacity development measures.
- Fishing communities' high level of vulnerability is often aggravated by the lack of (sector-specific) — or the insufficient reach of — existing welfare schemes. Ensuring the coverage of basic needs in fishing communities (e.g. housing with secure tenure rights, sanitation and drinking water) should be based on needs assessments to inform the provision of inclusive services. Good examples from the region, such as the opening of bank accounts with minimum deposits, should be further developed and applied to small-scale fisheries. Similarly, existing and proposed public health, fishing craft, life and property insurance scheme models (including group life insurance), integrated insurance and credit programmes, and subsidized loans need to be developed further, strengthened, tested and/or operationalized, particularly for women. Overall, information about the existence and access to welfare schemes has to be disseminated to fishing communities and the decentralized government institutions interacting with these communities.
- Strong and effective community and/or fisherfolk organizations empowered for responsible fisheries management are called for in all countries of the region. Where they exist, further technical support and capacity development is needed. Often the relationship between governments and these organizations has to be strengthened. Regional collaboration exists between CSOs, to share experiences on the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and solve common issues — including transboundary issues — but it could be expanded. Regional information sharing on the implementation of the SSF Guidelines — particularly on co-management and in relation to monitoring, with other stakeholders, including governments — could support collective regional learning (e.g. through BOBLME, BOBP-IGO or other international institutions).
- The small-scale fisheries sector often fails to provide equal opportunities and a safe and fair source of income, particularly for women and in inland fisheries. To address this, communities and their organizations need to be empowered to increase their bargaining power. Other means to better distribute benefits along the value chain should be investigated, e.g. community-hired middlemen or open auctions. Marketing infrastructure improvements (e.g. sanitary facilities) to improve working conditions and diversified means of transport to reduce dependency on middlemen (e.g. transport through CBOs, women's organizations) would particularly benefit women in the sector. The promotion of social standards can also contribute to improve living and working conditions in small-scale fisheries. Minimum wage schemes for small-scale fishworkers should be explored. Overall, the development and/or implementation of policies in support of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in line with international standards and agreements is imperative.

VALUE CHAINS, POST-HARVEST AND TRADE (CHAPTER 7 OF THE SSF GUIDELINES)

- Awareness-raising and technical support programmes should be provided to assist women in setting up women's cooperatives/societies and enable their enhanced participation in fisheries value chains. Microfinance assistance aimed at women, community savings and access to social protection programmes should be promoted to increase women's access to fish and other income-generating activities. Women should also have access to training in entrepreneurship and marketing. A regional women's network should be promoted for the exchange of good practices.
- Fair distribution of benefits from fish trade should be ensured through appropriate policies and measures. Information on market price through mobile applications/technology should be enabled for SSF. Fishers' organizations should represent fishers in negotiations with buyers to enable them to have a stronger voice. Access to low-interest credit should be supported to reduce dependency and shorten the value chain. States should work towards coherent trade policy at the regional level.
- Better returns from fish and fishery products should be sought through support to post-harvest infrastructures, processing technology and capacity development in close consultation with SSF and in line with their needs. The costs of fishing input should be reduced through collective purchasing by fisheries cooperatives. The exchange of experiences should be promoted between the countries of the region.
- Safety at sea should be promoted to ensure the safety of small-scale fishers, the efficiency of their operations and that fish reach the market. Awareness-raising, the provision of safety equipment, training in safety at sea, insurance schemes and improved communication/credibility of early warning systems should be developed. Safety at sea should be improved through patrolling and the safety of coastal population enhanced, e.g. through cyclone shelters.

As a principle, the SSF Guidelines should be implemented through integrated and holistic approaches, supported by participatory monitoring mechanisms at different levels (district, state, national) to achieve a vision of the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries based on:

- good governance and management of the natural resource base as well as the people who depend on it through the establishment of effective, interactive platforms (e.g. fisher community organizations, co-management platforms);
- clearly laid down, and respected, rights and responsibilities of the participating actors, including women and marginalized groups; and
- the consultation, collaboration and coordination of all actors concerned with regard to decision-making.

Such a process shall encompass the capacity development and empowerment of small-scale fisherfolk, providing them with the required social protection and meeting their well-being aspirations through proper social development interventions and the adoption of appropriate legal instruments and policies.

Accordingly, governments should consider developing and implementing National Plans of Action (NPOAs) for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

NEXT STEPS

The workshop identified the following next steps to actively promote the SSF Guidelines implementation at the national and regional level:

1. *FAO* should:
 - distribute the outcomes of workshop (draft) and final document to all workshop participants and governments, and to the relevant international and regional organizations;
 - provide guidance for the preparation of National Plans of Action to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines;
 - support the monitoring of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, e.g. during the Committee on Fisheries.
2. The *BOBLME project* should include support to follow up activities after the workshop and the implementation of the SSF Guidelines at the regional and national levels during its proposed second phase.
3. *Workshop participants* should:
 - Organize formal and informal debriefing meetings to inform their respective administrations and organizations about the workshop outcomes.
 - Disseminate the SSF Guidelines and the outcomes and recommendations of the workshop to relevant meetings, e.g. the National Fishworkers Forum Women in Fisheries meeting in Kerala, India, in December 2015, and the Asia–Pacific Fishery Commission meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in April 2016.
 - Enhance their own knowledge on the SSF Guidelines and regional SSF issues by consulting relevant reports and websites, e.g. FAO www.fao.org, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) www.icsf.net and the BOBLME project www.boblme.org.
 - Advocate the establishment of a regional oversight committee with at least one government and one CSO member per country (with due attention to gender balance) to follow up and monitor (e.g. through an email group), potentially building on existing initiatives (e.g. Asia Alliance on Small-Scale Fisheries).
4. *Government workshop participants* should report back to relevant ministries/departments on workshop outcomes and promote the incorporation of recommendations into existing national action plans and ongoing national planning processes (e.g. building on the NPOA experience from Indonesia), and advocate for relevant actions — including post-harvest-related capacity development, improvement of infrastructure/facilities, development of fisherwomen societies, and secure budget allocations.
5. *Governments* should establish SSF focal point in their fisheries administrations and other authorities, as appropriate, and organize national awareness-raising and planning workshops in collaboration with other stakeholders.
6. *CSOs, with the support of governments and FAO*, should develop additional language versions of the SSF Guidelines, e.g. in Bangla (Bangladesh) and Dhivehi (Maldives). The different existing and future local language versions should be disseminated widely.
7. *NGOs and CBOs/CSOs, with support from governments*, should prepare posters, simplified versions, short movies and radio features to raise awareness about the SSF Guidelines.
8. *CSOs* should appoint national focal points for SSF Guidelines implementation.
9. *Transparency International Sri Lanka* should disseminate information on the SSF Guidelines in monthly meetings and support the drafting of a National Plan of Action.
10. *The WorldFish Center* should check their ongoing intervention priorities against the issues identified during the workshop to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, including support to the Bangladeshi government’s initiatives on SSF Guidelines implementation and relevant research.

11. The *Sustainable Fisheries Partnership* will seek to incorporate SSF Guidelines issues identified during the workshop in their Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs) in the region and seek partners to assist in addressing these.
12. *Research institutes and universities* should:
 - contribute a chapter on the implementation of the SSF Guidelines to a planned publication by the research network Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) (case study on Bangladesh);
 - look into new research areas relevant to the application of the SSF Guidelines, including socio-economic data collection design and implementation (including gender-disaggregated data);
 - provide information in collaboration with fishing communities (participatory research) on socio-economic conditions and aquatic habitat to inform policy and management decisions;
 - integrate the SSF Guidelines into fisheries course curricula (e.g. *Sylhet Agriculture University of Bangladesh* in its fisheries course on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries).

The need to identify and secure funding, and encourage synergy between all stakeholders was acknowledged. This should include engagement with international and regional development partners, including through bilateral donors and embassies at the national level, and with new projects (including BOBLME phase 2). Opportunities with NGOs operating outside fisheries and working with human rights and social development should be explored.

At the national level, 2016 budget allocations should be used as far as possible and proposals for future budget years should be submitted. Interaction with the relevant non-fisheries Ministries and departments at all levels, and the mainstreaming of the SSF Guidelines in the relevant policies, strategies and plans should be encouraged, as well as public-private partnerships in support of the SSF Guidelines.

Introduction

The South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 23 to 26 November 2015, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project for Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. It was co-hosted by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of Sri Lanka, with additional financial support was provided by the Government of Norway. The workshop was attended by 49 participants, including representatives of governments, regional and international organizations, fisherfolk organizations, civil society organization (CSOs), NGOs, academia and other relevant actors

The workshop agenda and list of participants are included in APPENDIX 1.

Day 1

WORKSHOP OPENING SESSION



W.M.M.R. Adhikari, Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of Sri Lanka, invited FAO and the distinguished delegates from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Maldives to inaugurate the workshop with the lighting of the ceremonial oil lamp.

Giuseppe Bronzoni, acting FAO Representative for Sri Lanka, gave a warm welcome to participants on behalf of FAO. He recalled the importance of small-scale fisheries to the national economies and food security of the region and the objectives of the workshop. In particular, he emphasized that the workshop would discuss how to implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Reduction (SSF Guidelines) at the regional, national and local levels, and produce suggestions for concrete steps and action plans to this effect. He confirmed that FAO would give its fullest support and cooperate closely with Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka in raising awareness and providing support for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the region. He acknowledged the support given by BOBLME and the government of Norway to the organization of the workshop. He wished participants a successful meeting.

W.M.M.R. Adhikari addressed the workshop on behalf of the honourable Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. She underlined the crucial role of small-scale fisheries in the alleviation of poverty and ensuring food security in Sri Lanka, and noted the leading role of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and small-scale fisheries civil society organizations (CSOs) in the formulation of the SSF Guidelines. She recalled that small-scale fisheries have existed in Sri Lanka for centuries and continue to make an important contribution to the supply of animal protein, as well as the food security and livelihoods of the population. Small-scale fisheries also recently became a source of foreign exchange earnings by supplying fish for export markets. She noted that management issues associated with small-scale fisheries are complex, as small-scale fisheries differ in terms of the fishing boats, methods and gears used, the areas of fishing and fish landings, as well as the species targeted. In addition, there are numerous user conflicts, which often result in social

conflicts, strife and tensions. Although the use of modern technology has resulted in an increase in the productivity of small-scale fisheries in general, the productivity per unit of effort is much lower than that of industrial fishing. In such a context, the government of Sri Lanka has a special obligation to ensure that small-scale fisheries are sustainable. To this end, the government has taken a series of measures to enhance the economic and social conditions of small-scale fisheries through subsidies, soft loans, the provision of social amenities and more recently a life insurance scheme for fishers. Sri Lanka is grateful to FAO for supporting the development of the SSF Guidelines and for promoting the sustainability of small-scale fisheries, as well as providing technical assistance in the development of fisheries in Sri Lanka since its independence in 1948.

Nicole Franz, FAO, introduced the SSF Guidelines, adopted by the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2014. The SSF Guidelines are the first ever negotiated international instrument dedicated to small-scale fisheries. They are the outcome of a global participatory process and constitute a consensus on the principles and guidance for the governance and development of small-scale fisheries. More than 4 000 stakeholders were directly involved in the formulation of the SSF Guidelines with critical involvement from civil society organizations. The SSF Guidelines bring together social development and responsible fisheries, extending beyond fisheries. The SSF Guidelines complement other international instruments such as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995), the Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (2004) and the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (2012). All of these instruments have a common grounding in the human-rights-based approach.

Ms Franz explained that the SSF Guidelines encompass both marine and inland capture fisheries along the whole value chain. They have dedicated chapters on gender and on disaster risks and climate change. Policy coherence, information, capacity development, implementation support and monitoring are part of the SSF Guidelines' provisions and guidance, and are key to their implementation. The SSF Guidelines were approved a year ago; what is needed now is to use their principles to support change at global, regional, national and local levels. FAO continues to provide support and is developing the tools to facilitate implementation at national and local levels. At the regional level existing initiatives such as the BOBLME project can support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Most importantly, implementation must happen at the local and national level — and all stakeholders are called upon to play a role in this.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND MODUS OPERANDI

Lena Westlund, FAO consultant, introduced the workshop objectives, expected outputs and *modus operandi*. She noted that the implementation of the SSF Guidelines should be anchored at the local and national level, with strong links to regional and international policies and strategies. Accordingly, the workshop objectives and expected outputs were to:

- establish the current status of small-scale fisheries in the countries of the South Asian region;
- provide inputs and advice on priorities for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka;
- develop a framework for a regional SSF Guidelines implementation strategy that can inform the BOBLME Strategic Action Plan (SAP) implementation as well as provide guidance for National Plans of Action (NPOAs).

Within this context, the workshop would explore intersectoral linkages, collaboration and partnerships. It would also refer to the outcomes of the workshop organized by FAO in December 2014 on the *Global Assistance Programme in support of the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*,¹ as part of a series of regional workshops supported by FAO and its partners.

The workshop brought together governments, civil society representatives, researchers, regional organization representatives and NGOs from the participating countries. It was conducted in English and held over three and a half days. The workshop was structured around plenary presentations, discussions and working groups.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Chair: W.M.M.R. Adhikari

A CSO perspective on SSF Guidelines implementation in South Asia

Herman Kumara, Convenor, the National Fisheries Solidarity Movement (NAFSO)

Herman Kumara recounted how small-scale fisheries CSOs have been involved in the SSF Guidelines process. In 2008, the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP) and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) convened the Civil Society Forum at the Global Conference on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries: Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development, held in Bangkok, Thailand.² This Bangkok Statement emphasized the importance of human rights in the context of small-scale fisheries and was a stepping stone for CSO engagement in the development of the SSF Guidelines. In 2011 and 2012, national consultative meetings were held in the countries of the region as well as elsewhere, and the CSO group prepared a Civil Society global synthesis based on 22 country reports. Over 40 CSOs participated in the 31st Session of COFI in Rome in 2014 when the SSF Guidelines were endorsed.

In Sri Lanka, NAFSO has translated the SSF Guidelines into the Sinhala and Tamil languages and has also promoted their dissemination in the country; 40 training events on the SSF Guidelines have been carried out since November 2014. The published translation of the SSF Guidelines was presented to the Honourable Minister of Fisheries on 16 October 2015 on the occasion of the World Food Day. Moreover, an SSF Guidelines handbook for assisting fisherfolk communities and community-based organizations (CBOs) to better understand the content of the SSF Guidelines was launched at the World Fisheries Day celebrations held in Jaffna on 11 November 2015.

A Regional Perspective: The BOBLME project and the SSF Guidelines implementation

Rudolf Hermes, Chief Technical Advisor, BOBLME

Rudolf Hermes noted the important role that regional initiatives such as the BOBLME can play in supporting the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. The BOBLME is a six-year project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Norway and Sweden, and implemented by FAO; it is one of around 20 similar large marine ecosystem (LME) projects around the globe. It covers an area of 6.2 million km² and includes Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and Maldives in South Asia, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia in Southeast Asia. The focus of the BOBLME is

¹ See proceedings at www.fao.org/3/a-i4880e.pdf.

² See conference report at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1227t/i1227t.pdf>.

on three transboundary issues: overexploitation of fish stocks, pollution and habitat degradation, but in the first phase of the project there was no explicit mention of small-scale fisheries. Fisheries in the BOBLME region are however largely small-scale and there is a high degree of poverty within the sector. It is therefore a major concern in the region and the BOBLME has addressed small-scale fisheries considerations as a cross-cutting issue across its expected outcomes: improved governance of fisheries and environment, more effective regional cooperation, an enhanced knowledge base, capacity development, and the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF). Examples of concrete work supported by the BOBLME in relation to the SSF Guidelines include: support provided during the SSF Guidelines drafting and dissemination process; analysis of gender considerations (and production of related information material); support during labour dialogue with ICSF; enhancing capacities of fishing communities for resource management, working with ICSF in five countries; promoting capacity development for socio-economic monitoring (SocMon³, with NGOs and universities in five countries).

In addition to more than 300 reports, studies and reviews, the first phase of the BOBLME project has produced two key documents: a Transboundary diagnostic analysis (TDA), a report on the major transboundary issues and their causes; and the Strategic Action Programme (SAP), containing the agreed actions proposed to address the issues. The BOBLME Phase 2 for implementing the SAP is now being developed. The vision is that of a healthy ecosystem and the sustainable use of marine living resources for the benefit of the people and countries of the Bay of Bengal LME. The SAP, aside from the continued focus on fisheries, habitats and pollution, has a fourth theme: socio-economic considerations. The objective of this theme is for, “social and economic constraints to be addressed, leading to increased resilience and the empowerment of coastal people,” and the eight countries have agreed to regional and national actions in the SAP for Phase 2 of the BOBLME project with reference to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Concluding his presentation, Mr Hermes noted that the potential role of regional projects is to support the implementation of concrete measures in relation to the SSF Guidelines Chapters 5 to 9 and to promote an enabling environment (Chapters 10 to 13), including providing for regional coordination and learning, and promoting transboundary collaboration in case of shared resources, migratory fishing and migrant fishers. The SSF Guidelines are addressing the complex living and working conditions in the fisheries sector and on the coast. There is nonetheless a need for coordination and collaboration with a range of other sectors and their institutions. Government agencies need to work in partnership, and the EAF provides a framework for balancing ecosystem and human well-being through good governance. There is now the opportunity to link policy to action and move from theory to practice.

In the plenary discussions that followed the keynote presentations, the following points were raised:

- Participants recognized the *need for stronger collaboration with small-scale fisheries communities*, which requires policy-makers to take action to involve communities more actively in the decision-making process. This is also important to ensure compliance with management measures. The role of the CSOs in the development of the SSF Guidelines provides a good example of constructive engagement in decision-making processes, given that CSOs had developed a strong collaboration among themselves, coordinated by the International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty (IPC), ICSF, World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF) and WFFP. This has ensured a strong commitment by CSOs to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

³ See www.socmon.org.

- In *Sri Lanka*, the role of CSOs in the SSF Guidelines development process was critical and three dedicated consultations were held: one on marine capture fisheries, one on inland fisheries and one on women in fisheries. CSOs also play a particularly important role in making complex principles like those in the SSF Guidelines accessible to SSF communities.
- It is important to *integrate information generated by research into policy and decision-making* for fisheries management, and to share information and knowledge broadly. The BOBLME project has already supported the generation and dissemination of scientific information, including through the training of young scientists in communicating research results to policy-makers, and the BOBLME project Phase 2 should continue this kind of support.
- The workshop recognized that the *EAF is an important fisheries management process*, which includes the principles of adaptive management and the precautionary principle. However, policy-makers also need to improve at using the best available information to take decisions. Currently the EAF is often not sufficiently institutionalized in national fisheries governance frameworks and in other relevant non-fisheries institutions.
- The link between *fishing rights and human rights* was discussed. While fishers, fishworkers and their communities obviously have the same entitlement to human rights as everybody else, they are often marginalized and unable to realize their rights, in particular their socio-economic rights. *Transboundary fisheries are an important topic in the South Asia region*. One example is the *hilsa* fishery, shared by Bangladesh and India. The BOBLME has assisted the countries with respect to stock assessments and management advice. In Bangladesh, the arrangements include compensation for the socio-economic impacts of management measures, e.g. through rice ration distribution. This constitutes a good example of a holistic approach, taking socio-economic realities into consideration in fisheries management.
- Sri Lanka has a good institutional set-up but *a dedicated NPOA for SSF Guidelines implementation is needed* to ensure that the principles can be applied and action initiated. This requires capacity development, both at the fishing community and government level. Support for the public agencies as well as the communities is required to ensure action on the ground. In addition, the recommendation was put forward to incorporate the SSF Guidelines into Sri Lanka's national legal framework.

COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

Sri Lanka

Sumana Ediriweera, Deputy Director (socio-economic) of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources – Sri Lanka

In 2014, the fishing fleet of Sri Lanka consisted of 4 447 multiday boats, 876 one-day inboard engine boats, 23 982 fibreglass outboard engine boats (6–7 m), 2 720 outboard engine traditional crafts, 21 963 non-motorised traditional crafts and 2 308 beach seines. The country does not have a formal definition for small-scale fisheries but, generally, fishing by motorized and non-motorized traditional and small outboard engine boats (6–7m) within the inshore coastal waters are referred to as small-scale. Since these boats constitute 98 percent of the coastal fishing fleet, almost all fishing conducted in coastal waters can be classified as small-scale, and small-scale coastal fisheries contribute to over 50 percent of all fish landed in the country (52 percent in 2014). They provide livelihoods for over 150 000 small-scale fishers and sustain a coastal population of over 850 000. Moreover, export-oriented fisheries for shrimp, lobster, chank, sea cucumber,

and the collection of marine aquarium fish from the inshore coastal waters earns over LKR 10 million annually (30 percent of the total earned from exports of fish and fishery products).

Women play an important role in fish processing and marketing. They also normally assist their fisher husbands in sorting the fish at the landing sites and in repairing nets, and handle the family budget. In fisheries organizations such as Rural Fisheries Organizations, women make up about a fifth of members. The Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Act No. 2 of 1996 and the Amendment No. 35 of 2013 provide a basis for involving fishing communities in decision-making processes. Women are represented on the Advisory Board to the Fisheries Minister.

The coastal fisheries sector is vulnerable to climate change and disaster risks including sea level rise, floods and droughts, which can destroy the properties of fishing communities and also affect the fishery resources. Other risks and constraints in the small-scale coastal fishery include safety at sea issues because of unsafe boats, limited access to markets, poor infrastructure — including sanitary and drinking water facilities — and a lack of alternative livelihoods and youth employment opportunities. However, there are also strengths and opportunities: the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources has a relatively strong institutional network, with regional fisheries officers covering all coastal districts. One of the Ministry's objectives is to improve the nutritional status and food security of the population, and there is a three-year fisheries development plan focusing on averting malnutrition. Some of the areas in the SSF Guidelines are already being addressed and the Ministry's vision and mission is to increase fish production and fish consumption while improving the socio-economic conditions of fishing communities. The SSF Guidelines will be an important tool for supporting these processes.

Bangladesh

Gaziur Rahman, Scientific Officer, Marine Fisheries Survey and Management Unit, Chittagong – Bangladesh

The marine capture fisheries sector in Bangladesh is multigear and multispecies. There are about 184 trawlers and 67 669 artisanal boats engaged in fishing. During 2013–14, the country's total fish production was 3.54 million metric tonnes, to which inland and marine production were contributing 83.22 percent and 16.78 percent, respectively. The sector plays an important role in rural employment, poverty alleviation and food security. Fish provides 60 percent of the national animal protein supply for human consumption. Almost all coastal household members are engaged in fisheries-related activities including — in addition to fishing — salt production, fish processing, fry collection, shrimp farming, etc.

The small-scale fisheries sector contributes 3.69 percent of GDP and 2 percent of national foreign exchange earnings. Small-scale fisheries use low technology, and commercial or subsistence fishing practices. Small-scale traditional boats mostly exploit fish and shrimp juveniles and they engage in daily, weekly or fortnightly fishing. The wooden and fibreglass boats are 12–20 m and equipped with 16–22 horsepower engines.

More than 1.40 million women are involved in the fisheries sector, which represents 1 percent of the total population. In the fish processing industry, 80 percent of the workers are women. Women play an important role in fish drying, net-making and repairing, shrimp fry collection, fish marketing, aquafarming and shell collection.

Fisheries management in small-scale fisheries is limited compared to the commercial fisheries sector. There is a zoning arrangement reserving the area up to 40 m of depth for small-scale fisheries. Small-scale fishers are given an ID card and a subsistence allowance not to catch fish in the closed seasons declared as such by the Government.

The small-scale fishing group “Marine Fisheries Harvesting Boat Owner Association” participates in central decision-making, and fishers and fishworkers may also participate in local government administration, community management groups and in community decision-making.

Disaster risks and climate change impacts include: increases in salinity levels creating conflicts between shrimp farmers and paddy cultivators in rural villages; increased frequency of rough seas, storms and cyclones, with impacts on the safety of fishers and on fishing operations; and a lack of a continuous water supply from rivers which threatens the Sundarban mangrove forest. In order to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, the existing rules and regulations need to be reviewed, and stock assessments of the Bay of Bengal’s the fishery resources carried out to determine safe exploitation levels, and the number of artisanal boats and trawlers that can be permitted to fish.

Maldives

Ahmed Shifaz, Senior Research Officer, Fisheries Compliance, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture – Maldives

Maldives consists of a chain of 26 coral atolls comprising 1 190 islands inhabited by a total population of 370 000. The fisheries sector is the second major income-generating sector after tourism. In 2014, the fisheries sector contributed more than 97 percent of the country’s total physical exports with a value of USD 142 million. The sector is the largest source of employment in the country, engaging 20 percent of the total labour force. Fishing for tuna and reef fish is done by using pole and line, trolling, handline and longline.

There is no legal definition of small-scale fisheries but it is general considered to include subsistence and artisanal fishing using low levels of technology and selling fish in local markets. There is a lack of data but the sector has a high degree of diversity and flexibility in its forms of exploitation and a wide and diffuse geographical distribution of its operations. Small-scale fisheries represent a major source of fish supply for fishing communities and provide job opportunities. The small-scale fisheries sector also supplies fresh fish to the tourism industry and it is culturally important. Women’s contribution to post-harvest activities is essential and many cottage fish processing activities are run as family businesses managed by women. Small-scale fishers have common rights of access to fishing grounds; there are only certain gear restrictions. Within 100 nautical miles of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the area is reserved for traditional pool and line, handline, trolling and other line fishing. Island lagoons and surrounding island reef areas are designated for island communities and subsistence fisherfolk.

New fisheries legislation is currently being drafted and a fisheries master plan, including provisions for small-scale fisheries, is being developed. In the past, there has been no or very little participation of fishers in decision-making. The current institutional arrangements intend to incorporate fishers, fishworkers and women in decision-making processes. However, it is challenging to reach each and every small-scale fishing community because they are not well organized and geographically scattered. There fisheries administration is a strong central presence, but the government is currently in the process of decentralization.

Risks due to climate change include sea level rise, natural disasters, the effects of El Niño, heavy rains, flooding and other extreme and unexpected weather events. The small-scale fisheries sector also faces difficulties with regard to competition from large-scale processors and fish exporters, as well as from the development of other sectors leading to declining fishing grounds. In terms of the strengths and opportunities to implement the SSF Guidelines, there are efforts at all levels to sustain and develop

traditional pole and line fishing and sustainable fishing practices. Moreover, socio-economic policies and strategies are being developed to support local fishing communities' empowerment by introducing fishing cooperatives and developing small- and medium-sized enterprises in fisheries. The way forward is co-management and developing cooperatives.

India

Titto d'Cruz, Independent consultant, Trivandrum, Kerala, India

India is a very large and complex country and the presentation focused on small-scale fisheries in Kerala, as one of the leading fish producing states in India. The state is known for its high productivity, species diversity and skilled fishers, and Kerala sustains a vibrant small-scale fishery. The state hosted the world's first fisheries development project with Norway in 1952. It also became a leading exporter of marine products in the early 1960s. Despite all these achievements, small-scale fishing communities remained outliers to the mainstream development in Kerala. This dualism in development triggered the formation of one of the earliest independent fishworkers' trade union movements, which demanded socio-economic development and ecosystem management. One of the main reasons for the present, improved, living conditions of SSF communities today is their earlier collective action followed by the state's positive responses.

However, the small-scale fisheries of Kerala still face many challenges today, and an attempt has been made to raise awareness about this through engagement in the SSF Guidelines development process.

The SSF Guidelines were disseminated by approaching the multiple stakeholders concerned and ensuring the community's preparedness. . Case studies and discussions were also undertaken by arranging regional and state level interactive sessions to enhance and share knowledge and information. The SSF Guidelines offered hope and determination to the men and women fisherfolk, community leaders, CSO representatives, the leaders of the cooperatives and trade unions, fisheries scientists and policy-makers who attended these workshops. The summary of the SSF Guidelines prepared in the local language and the deliberations in the workshops reflected the current challenges for SSF in Kerala: they were well-received and appreciated by the various stakeholders. Development in small-scale fishing communities is a complex process and it requires real catalysts (multiple stakeholders) with a proper vision to address the present challenges. Significant resolutions formulated by this multistakeholder group were: (1) the need to redefine the constituents of the small-scale fisheries — What is small? What is not? (2) How do we limit financially and ecologically unsustainable growth? How do we achieve tenure rights to fish resources and fishing zones? Collective action is needed to achieve the objectives laid out in the SSF Guidelines.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION OF DAY 1

Thanks to the plenary presentations of Day 1, workshop participants gained an overview of the status of the small-scale fisheries sector in South Asia and in the four participating countries. In summary, it was noted that the sector is very important in all four countries, both in marine and inland waters, and that the majority of fishers and fishworkers in the region are small-scale operators that contribute a large share of total landings. Women play an important role, particularly in the post-harvest sector.

However, generally speaking there is no clear and formal definition of small-scale fisheries, though countries tend to categorise subsistence and traditional fishing with low levels of technology and serving mainly local markets as small-scale. Small-scale fisheries actors are often marginalized and face threats from the overexploitation

of resources and competition from other sectors: indeed, constraints on sustainable small-scale fisheries also relate to issues outside the fisheries sector itself. The need to empower small-scale fisheries actors was clearly noted. Positive, ongoing developments in this respect were reported on and there is a perceived increase in the recognition of the importance of small-scale fisheries and the need to support them. All countries are moving towards policies and development strategies that promote the strengthening of participatory processes and institutional structures, and co-management. Some legal reforms are under way, although more work will be required in this area.

Other important points highlighted include:

- The ecosystem approach to fisheries management is an essential process (but not yet sufficiently institutionalized in the governance frameworks of national fisheries).
- The human rights of fishing communities need to be recognized (linking fishing rights and human rights).
- Governments need to actively engage fishers and fishing communities in decision-making.
- Information generated by research needs to be integrated into policy and decision-making in fisheries management.
- Transboundary fisheries are an important topic and there is a clear role for regional projects and initiatives to play.
- Capacity development is needed for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines (through NPOAs).
- There is an urgent need to move from theory to practice and link policy to actions!

Days 2 and 3

ADDITIONAL THEMATIC PRESENTATIONS

Southeast Asia experience and future plans with regard to SSF Guidelines implementation

Trian Yunanda, Assistant Deputy Director for Programme Cooperation, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) Indonesia

Trian Yunanda shared Indonesia's experience of supporting the small-scale fisheries sector in line with the SSF Guidelines. He explained that poverty in coastal communities mainly concerns fishers; the poverty index for fishers is higher than the national average. To address this, a new policy direction has been embarked upon for 2014–2019, based on three pillars: sovereignty, sustainability and prosperity. After the adoption of the SSF Guidelines by FAO COFI in 2014, action was taken to:

- translate the SSF Guidelines into Bahasa Indonesia;
- organize a series of meetings and conduct a national workshop to raise awareness of the need for an NPOA for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines;
- develop a draft NPOA for the implementation of SSF Guidelines (NPOA-SSF).

The Indonesia NPOA-SSF is structured according to the SSF Guidelines and has two main parts. Part 1 deals with responsible and sustainable fisheries and Part 2 with policy support. The 2016 work plan includes the following under Part 1:

1. Governance of Tenure and Resources Management

- Providing ID cards for 1 million fishers
- Certify fishers' land (*sehat nelayan*) at a rate of 20 000 units/year (in total 60 000 units have already been certified)
- Enactment of Act 1/2015: Zonation.

2. Social Development, Employment and Gender

- Develop 100 fisher villages
- Transform 'joint business groups' ('KUB') into fisher cooperatives (400 cooperatives)
- Replace 3 540 traditional fishing vessels.

3. Value Chains, Post-harvest and Trade

- Develop a programme for fish product diversification (for 1 000 fisherwomen/year)
- Provide capital business access (business credits for the people): IDR 5 trillion
- Ensure domestic investment: IDR 23 trillion
- Develop a microfinance institution for fishers
- Revitalize fish auction halls in 700 locations.

He also presented the results of the Southeast Asian Regional Consultation Workshop for the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines⁴ that was held in Bali, Indonesia, on 24–28 August 2015. It was co-organized by the MMAF of Indonesia and FAO in collaboration with the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) and BOBLME project. This workshop was organized in a similar way to

⁴ See www.fao.org/3/a-i5253e.pdf

the Regional Consultation for South Asia, and recommendations for a Southeast Asia Regional Plan of Action were formulated. The workshop also agreed on a vision for future small-scale fisheries in the region:

Resource management, rights, social and economic constraints are addressed through the implementation of the SSF guidelines, leading to increased empowerment, improved livelihood and food security and the increased resilience of small-scale fisheries and the people who depend upon them.

SEAFDEC is taking a leading role in following up on the workshop. A SEAFDEC Regional Technical Consultation to discuss a zero draft of the Regional Plan of Action (for subsequent introduction into the ASEAN mechanism) is planned.⁵

Women and small-scale fisheries: Bangladesh perspective

Muzib Mehdy, Co-worker, South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) – Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, fishing has historically been considered undignified work; fishers and fishworkers were traditionally from socially disadvantaged groups and/or a lower caste, the *Dalit*. As fishing has become more profitable, so people from other castes have increasingly become involved. There is a growing demand for fish and the need for an income has become more important than tradition. This has led to a decline in the access to inland water bodies for poor and marginalised people — including women — and *haors* and *beels* tend to be controlled by influential people through leasing and grabbing. By virtue of the increasing demand for fish, the trend of starting fish farms and hatcheries, usually owned by men, has emerged. Some women are engaged in producing fish in rice fields, small ponds or cages with the help of government or NGO support. In small-scale coastal marine fisheries, women are generally involved as low-paid labour (as carriers, sorters, processors, cleaners, dryers, etc.). They do not go fishing by boat but contribute greatly at the household level and in accessory activities. Women are also often involved in the collection of shrimp and prawn fry, and seed for aquaculture.

The reasons behind women's more limited participation in fisheries can be explained by their lack of education and ownership rights, and by societal gender perceptions. Often their contribution is not recognized as productive work and when their labour is required they do not have equal participation in decision-making processes and in leadership roles. It is also not uncommon for them to face health hazards and threats of sexual abuse.

What needs to be done, therefore, to change this unequal situation and achieve gender equity? A few suggestions include:

- increase efforts to change the overall mindset about the role of women (from reproductive to productive);
- promote equal ownerships of boats, nets, ponds and land;
- update gender disaggregated data/information;
- work towards a redistribution of household work between male and female members of fishing families;
- support initiatives to educate women and children in fishing communities, including training for women to develop their skills and self-confidence;
- undertake the appropriate health and safety measures for women and children engaged in the fishing sector.

⁵ This technical consultation took place on 7–9 June 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand (see www.seafdec.org for more information).

The gender equality chapter of the SSF Guidelines covers all basic issues relating to gender and small-scale fisheries. It is vital to support its implementation by engaging all the relevant stakeholders.

Climate change and disaster risks

Florence Poulain, Fisheries and Aquaculture Officer, FAO

Florence Poulain gave an overview of climate change and disaster risk vulnerabilities in relation to small-scale fisheries. There are 2.5 billion smallholders in the world who depend on agriculture, fisheries, forestry and livestock for their livelihoods and they are the hardest hit by climate change and disasters. In 2014 agriculture absorbed some 22 percent of all damages caused by natural disasters in developing countries, and 6 percent of all damages within the agriculture sector were in fisheries, at an estimated value of USD 1.7 billion. Still, this is likely to be underestimated. Developing countries are generally more affected than developed countries and, in 2014, India featured in the top ten countries of natural disasters measured by economic damage; India and Sri Lanka were in the top ten countries in terms of disaster mortality; and India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh were in the top ten countries by number of victims.

The fisheries sector is also vulnerable to climate change impacts. Variations as a result of climate change in ocean currents, the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO), rising sea levels, rainfall, storm frequency and severity, etc. may all have impacts on fisheries production, ecology, operations, fishing communities and their livelihoods, as well as on the economy. Specific impacts may also include changes in fish distribution and catches within the region. A modelling exercise by Cheung in 2009⁶ projected the estimated decrease in fish catches in tropical areas, coastal areas and the Antarctic in 2051–60 as compared to the 2001–10 period.

The vulnerability of small-scale fisheries to climate and disasters is well recognized in the SSF Guidelines, which contain a dedicated chapter on disaster risks and climate change (Chapter 9). In terms of the actions needed, programming for disaster risk reduction/management and climate change adaptation in fisheries can be done by strengthening fisheries governance in line with the principles and approaches contained in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the SSF Guidelines — including applying EAF, mainstreaming climate change and disasters into fisheries strategies and policies, and updating technical standards in relation to, for example, safety at sea. This should be done holistically, in close consultation with fishing communities and across different sectors, as recommended by the SSF Guidelines, Chapter 9. Enhancing information and early warning systems are also important. Information on local-level impacts and vulnerability is lacking which hampers disaster risk reduction and adaptation planning. The capacity to conduct vulnerability assessments, monitoring and apply early warning systems needs to be strengthened.

Climate change and disasters can be considered an opportunity for building back better and addressing some of the sector's weaknesses and issues, particularly with regard to safety, in addition to resource and financial sustainability. Existing good practices need to be scaled up and new practices developed. Enhanced preparedness for responding to fisheries emergencies is also key. FAO has developed fisheries and aquaculture emergency response guidance, for both sector and non-sector specialists, to help them understand how to respond to emergencies affecting fisheries. The guidance provides best practices, key indicators and notes to ensure the use of appropriate practices and a consideration of key issues. This guidance can be downloaded from the internet.⁷ She concluded that it is important to integrate disaster risks and climate

⁶ W.W.L.Cheung *et al.* Climate change impact on marine biodiversity. Fish and Fisheries. 2009

⁷ www.fao.org/3/a-i3432e.pdf

change in fisheries because small-scale fishing communities are vulnerable; investment in risk reduction is cost-effective when addressing the root causes of vulnerability and offering an opportunity to build back better, in addition to ensuring a continuum between relief and development.

Addressing voids in research: small-scale fisheries

Mr Oscar Amarasinghe, Professor, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka

Oscar Amarasinghe started his presentation by discussing the concepts of sustainable development and sustainable fisheries, and how human development goals and ecosystem health goals can come into conflict in fisheries governance and management. There tend to be two different governance systems concerned with these two goals: the state governance system, based on written law, aims at the sustainable use of resources, while the non-state system — including norms, customs, traditions and community law — promotes human development based on the principles of equality, well-being and social harmony.

As the two systems are diverse, complex and dynamic, they require ‘interactive governance’. Interactive governance addresses diversity through inclusiveness, while complex elements are tackled through rational, holistic, integrative approaches; a system’s dynamic aspects in turn demand an interactive and adaptive framework. This means applying good decision-making, appropriate policy formulation and good governance by virtue of an interactive process including all relevant public and private actors.

Mr Amarasinghe explained that research has an important role to play in ensuring the necessary links between policy and communities. As fisheries management regimes have evolved more towards co-management, involving both communities and states, a greater need for different types of research has emerged. There are several issues to look into such as: the identification and recognition of rights, how rights and responsibilities are allocated, mechanisms for interaction, representation of stakeholders/fishers, capacity building and information needs.

There is a particularly large research void in terms of social development, employment and decent work, which is an important thematic area in the SSF Guidelines. Questions that need to be answered include:

- What do we know about small-scale fishers? Who are they? What is their profile (education, health, housing, rights, customs and values)?
- What do we know about their goals? (Sustainable livelihoods? Well-being?)
- What do we know about their needs? (Credit, insurance, voice, representation)
- What about their living standards? (Income levels, poverty)
- What are the factors causing well-being and deprivation?

Related to this are issues regarding safety, working conditions on board fishing boats, insurance (medical, life, disability, etc.) and social security (pension schemes, etc.). Another area needing attention is gender. There is great regional disparity with regard to gender equality and the changing roles of women. Still, household violence continues to affect well-being and capacity building and empowerment are needed.

Fisherwomen of Eastern India: Struggling for self-sufficiency, problems and prospects

Shanti Ranjan Behera, Advisor, East Coast Fish Workers Union, India

Shanti Ranjan Behera talked about the gender dimension of fisheries with a focus on eastern India. She explained that people tend to think, wrongly, that fisheries is a male activity; but most of the fish trading, retailing and processing is done by women

who are often the fishers' relatives (wives or daughters). Nonetheless, women are rarely recognized as legitimate stakeholders in the sector and their specific needs and aspirations are not systematically integrated into the design of fisheries and aquaculture policies and management. Women are often the victims of the negative impacts of overfishing and emerging environmental concerns like climate change. The poor access to entitlements and insecure tenure rights, which are typical problems for small-scale fisheries actors in general, are particularly difficult issues for the women in the sector.

She suggested that action is urgently needed to empower women. Activities in this respect could include:

- informing women of their rights through awareness-raising programmes;
- supporting the formation of self-help groups, cooperatives and trade unions;
- capacity building for members of these groups (training, seminars, workshops, networking, etc.);
- promoting better and equal livelihood opportunities;
- ensuring equal and proper education rights;
- influencing development decisions;
- highlighting the needs of fisherwomen;
- advocacy of fisherwomen-friendly policies at all levels.

SUMMARY OF PLENARY DISCUSSION

In the discussion after the presentations, the following issues and information were brought up:

- With regard to *climate change*, it was noted that various scenarios are possible, including predictions for sea level rises severely affecting Maldives and parts of Bangladesh. However, it was pointed out that there is still a high level of uncertainty with regard to climate change impacts. One example of a concrete impact of climate change in the region is coastal erosion. One coastal zone management measure to address erosion is to construct walls in the water; these impact on fishers' access to the water area by creating obstacles. Other measures, including the negotiated resettlements of fishing communities, could be considered. Another impact of global warming is the change in fish distribution in the region — e.g. sardine and mackerel — and research needs to identify other species that can be exploited. It was suggested that the BOBLME project could play a role in exploring the relationship between species at various trophic levels. The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) in Kochi, India, has conducted a workshop to model some of these impacts, and they are willing to engage with other research institutes in the region in collaboration with the BOBLME project. A key issue is to ensure that information is made available and informs policy-makers efficiently. Fisher organizations can play a crucial role in this.
- An example for *disaster risk management* in the region is a tsunami centre in Sri Lanka that provides technical support and monitoring 24 hours a day. The centre also has a dedicated communication line for fishers, including on weather conditions.
- The *role of women* in the small-scale fisheries sector is changing in some parts of the region and there was a discussion as to whether this affects the way in which fisheries associations are set up in terms of membership. In Sri Lanka, a report on the situation of women in fishing communities covering five provinces is being prepared and will provide detailed information on women's involvement in decision-making and the use of their time, etc. In another study, key success factors in relation to value chain development were analysed to identify entry points for empowering women, including through aquaculture development.

Experience from India demonstrates that access to education for women is a key enabling factor for empowerment and active engagement in the value chain.

- Good practice is needed to better understand the *well-being dimensions* of fishing communities and how to support them. The EAF provides an important tool to capture aspects of well-being and FAO has developed specific guidance on how to better explore the human dimension of EAF.
- *Co-management committees* exist in Sri Lanka and meet regularly to discuss fisheries management measures and their implementation (e.g. for lobster and ornamental species). These committees are monitored by the Ministry to ensure that the resources are managed sustainably. The Special Area Management (SAM) is another example of a holistic approach, which has been applied to lagoons in Sri Lanka. These are used for tourism but also represent important habitats for certain species, such as turtles. The various sectors generate negative externalities to each other. The SAM team was a multistakeholder body established to discuss issues and find agreed solutions, and included religious and local leaders. The system worked well until the supporting government officials were moved and it collapsed.
- Numerous organizations have been established to support fishing communities but there are varying degrees of success in terms of empowerment and in claiming and realizing the rights of fishing communities. *Power imbalances* between different sectors, such as tourism and the military, may have an impact on how the interests of fishing communities are considered in multistakeholder committees. Sectoral power imbalances indicate that even if there is a framework which enables community involvement it needs to be implemented effectively to have a positive effect on small-scale fisheries livelihoods. This may take time and require learning, as well as the recognition that improvements need to be made.
- The Sri Lankan Ministry provides *capacity development activities* for fishing communities and the budget also supports social mobilization activities. CSOs also support fisherfolk organizations to better engage in policy-making and implementation, sometimes in collaboration with research institutes. Moreover, there are common efforts by CSOs and the Ministry to engage with other partners, notably religious groups and other ministries. The recognition of the role of CSOs in Sri Lanka is a recent positive development and improving their relationship with the public administration is an ongoing process.
- A questionnaire, based on ILO standards, has been developed to investigate the *working conditions on fishing vessels*. This work is carried out in collaboration with the national employment bureau in Sri Lanka and aims to promote the application of ILO standards in the industry.

Working group sessions

WORKING GROUP ARRANGEMENTS

Three working group sessions took place with three parallel groups, each of which focused on a different thematic area of Part 2 of the SSF Guidelines:

1. Group 1: Governance of tenure in SSF and resources management (Chapter 5 of SSF Guidelines)
2. Group 2: Social development, employment and decent work, and gender equality (Chapters 6 and 8)
3. Group 3: Value chains, post-harvest and trade (Chapter 7)

Climate change and disaster risks (Chapter 9 of the SSF Guidelines) was considered as a cross-cutting issue throughout the discussions.

Each group was led by a facilitator and had a rapporteur taking notes of the discussions. Each group designated a presenter from the group to report back to plenary. The groups remained the same throughout to ensure continuity of the discussions. The composition of the working groups is available in APPENDIX 2.

WORKING GROUP SESSION 1: AGREEING ON PRIORITIES

The objective of the first working group session was to familiarize working group participants with the relevant chapters of the SSF Guidelines, discuss priority issues for the region and define visions and/or objectives for the future. To facilitate discussion the working groups were provided with the following guiding questions:

- Which of the issues included in the relevant chapters of the SSF Guidelines are particularly relevant to the region? Identify a maximum of five issues.
- Where do you want to be in the future? Define a vision or objective for each of the issues identified.
- What are the main constraints to achieving the identified visions/objectives?

WORKING GROUP SESSION 2: SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

The objective of the second working group session was to review existing good practice, which could be built upon to inform implementation planning at both the national and regional levels. Accordingly, the working groups were tasked to answer the following guiding question:

- What good practices exist in relation to the priorities and visions/ objectives identified?

WORKING GROUP SESSION 3: ACTION PLANNING

The objective of this working group session was to provide concrete elements for national and regional implementation planning. The working groups were asked to:

- Identify key actions at regional and national levels, including responsibilities, based on the outcomes of the previous sessions.
- In the reply, the working groups were to consider the sections of Part 3 of the SSF Guidelines (policy coherence; institutional coordination and collaboration; information, research and communication; capacity development; implementation support and monitoring).
- Formulate recommendations to the regional workshop for follow-up, based on the guiding question:

- What are the key next steps when moving towards national and regional implementation?
- Discuss opportunities for funding, based on the guiding questions:
 - What are possible funding mechanisms?
 - What are possible sources of funding or support for the region?

Reporting back from the working groups

After each working group session the groups reported back to plenary, followed by a discussion. The detailed outputs of the working group — summarized after the third and last session — are included in APPENDIX 3. From the discussions it emerged that there was some overlap in the different issues across the various groups — in relation to fisherfolk organizations and participation, for example. The importance of all paragraphs in the SSF Guidelines was stressed, and the exercise of agreeing on priorities in relation to certain principles of the SSF Guidelines does not imply that others are not considered key.

The main conclusions of each working group — as agreed in the final summary of workshop conclusions (see also the Executive Summary above) — were as follows.

Group 1: Governance of tenure in SSF and resources management (Chapter 5 of the SSF Guidelines)

- *Representation of small-scale fisheries actors in decision-making, including women and marginalized groups, needs to be strengthened.* Small-scale fisheries communities should be empowered to participate in aquatic resources management and benefit from socio-economic development. National and local level multistakeholder platforms, management committees and community-based organizations (CBOs) should be given responsibility through co-management arrangements. Capacity development for participatory management is needed (ecosystem approach to fisheries EAF), including its legal aspects,— both for government officials and community representatives.
- *Multi-tier platforms for joint management are also needed at the regional level for the management of shared resources, e.g. by Sri Lanka and India; and by India and Bangladesh.* Regional and bilateral arrangements should be supported and facilitated by regional organizations and projects, such as the Bay of Bengal Programme — Intergovernmental Organization (BOBP-IGO) and the BOBLME project proposed second phase. Governments should also ask, through the respective governing structures, for these and other relevant regional bodies to assist in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines — e.g. the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Coastal Zone Management Centre (SCZMC), the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) and the IUCN Mangroves for the Future (MFF).
- *Mechanisms for effective and meaningful consultations with communities, including consultative committees at the district, state and national level (as appropriate) and regular visits to fishing communities by policy-makers, should be set up by fisheries administrations and other relevant government authorities.*
- *Legitimate customary tenure rights to both fishery resources and land, need to be legalised.* Efforts should be made (by CSOs and academia/researchers) to identify and document such rights and to advocate for their recognition by governments. Likewise, cases where small-scale fisheries communities are threatened or affected by the loss of land to other sectors need to be documented, and legal protection and support provided.
- *Human rights violations should be identified, documented and addressed through collaboration across fisheries-sector stakeholders and national human rights commissions.* Governments should ensure that international human rights

conventions, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, are applied in cases of transboundary and small-scale migrant fisheries activities. CSOs, academia/researchers and the media have a role to play in drawing attention to and raising awareness of human rights violations.

Group 2: Social development, employment, decent work and gender equality (Chapters 6 and 8 of the SSF Guidelines)

- *Human capacities of small-scale fisheries stakeholders at all levels should be developed*, as a precondition to implementing holistic approaches (e.g. EAF). This needs to be strengthened by long-term financial support for small-scale fisheries. An important action, already partly initiated in the region, is the provision of ID cards for small-scale fisherfolk to facilitate access to services. Women require special attention in terms of skill development and start-up support. Overall, the sector requires a permanent/temporary diversification of income-generating activities to be identified and developed. Improved socio-economic information, provided by fishing communities (e.g. through the use of ICT) is also key to informing human capacity development measures.
- *The high level of vulnerability of fishing communities is often aggravated by the lack of (sector-specific) existing welfare schemes, or their insufficient reach.* Ensuring the coverage of basic needs in fishing communities (e.g. housing with secure tenure rights, sanitation and drinking water) should be based on needs assessments to inform the provision of these inclusive services. Good examples from the region, such as the opening of bank accounts with minimum deposits, should be further developed and applied to small-scale fisheries. Similarly, existing and proposed public health, fishing craft, life and property insurance scheme models (including group life insurance), integrated insurance and credit programmes and subsidized loans — particularly for women — need to be further developed, strengthened, tested and/or operationalized. Overall, information about the existence and access to welfare schemes has to be disseminated to fishing communities and decentralized government institutions interacting with those communities.
- *Strong and effective community and/or fisherfolk organizations empowered for responsible fisheries management* are called for in all countries of the region. Where they exist, further technical support and capacity development is needed. Often the relationship between governments and these organizations has to be strengthened. Regional collaboration between CSOs exists but could be expanded, in order to share experiences on the SSF Guidelines implementation and solve common issues, including transboundary issues. Regional information sharing on the SSF Guidelines implementation, in particular on co-management and in relation to monitoring, with other stakeholders, including governments, could support collective regional learning (e.g. through BOBLME, BOBP-IGO or other international institutions).
- *The small-scale fisheries sector often fails to provide equal opportunities and a safe and fair source of income, in particular for women and in inland fisheries.* To address this, communities and their organizations need to be empowered to increase their bargaining power. Other means to better distribute benefits along the value chain should be investigated, e.g. community-hired middlemen or open auctions. Marketing infrastructure improvements (e.g. sanitary facilities) to improve working conditions and diversified means of transport to reduce dependency on middlemen (e.g. transport through CBOs, women's organizations) would particularly benefit women in the sector. The promotion of social standards can also contribute to improve living and working conditions in small-scale fisheries.

Minimum wage schemes for small-scale fishworkers should be explored. Overall, the development and/or implementation of policies in support of gender equality and gender mainstreaming is imperative, in line with international standards and agreements.

Group 3: Value chains, post-harvest and trade (Chapter 7 of the SSF Guidelines)

- *Awareness-raising and technical support programmes* should be provided to assist women in setting up women's cooperatives/societies and enable their enhanced participation in fisheries value chains. Microfinance assistance targeting women, community savings and access to social protection programmes should be promoted to increase women's access to fish and to other income-generating activities. Women should also have access to training in entrepreneurship and marketing. A regional women's network should be promoted for the exchange of good practices.
- *Fair distribution of benefits from fish trade should be ensured* through appropriate policies and measures. Information on market price through mobile applications/technology should be enabled for SSF. Fishers' organizations to represent fishers during negotiations with buyers so that they have a stronger voice. Access to low-interest credit should be supported to reduce dependency and shorten the value chain. States should work towards coherent trade policy at the regional level.
- *Better return from fish and fishery products should be sought through support to post-harvest infrastructures, processing technology and capacity development* in close consultation with the SSF and in line with their needs. The costs of fishing input should be reduced through collective purchasing by fisheries cooperatives. Exposure/exchange of experiences should be promoted between the countries of the region.
- *Safety at sea should be promoted* to ensure the safety of small-scale fishers, the efficiency of their operations and that fish reach the market. Awareness-raising, provision of safety equipment, training in safety at sea, insurance schemes, and improved communication/credibility of early warning systems should be developed. Security at sea should be improved through patrolling and the safety of coastal population enhanced, e.g. through cyclone shelters.

Day 4

Chair: Rudolf Hermes, BOBLME

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Based on the outcomes of the group work, the presentations and plenary discussions, the workshop agreed on summary conclusions and recommendations, and specific points for the way forward.

- *FAO* should
 - distribute the outcomes of the workshop (draft) and final document to all workshop participants and governments, as well as to the relevant international and regional organizations;
 - provide guidance for the preparation of National Plans of Action to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines;
 - support the monitoring of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines e.g. during the Committee on Fisheries.
- The *BOBLME project* should include support for follow-up activities after the workshop and the implementation of the SSF Guidelines at the regional and national level during its proposed second phase.
- *Workshop participants* should:
 - Organize formal and informal debriefing meetings to inform their respective administrations and organizations of the workshop outcomes.
 - Disseminate the SSF Guidelines and the workshop outcomes and recommendations to relevant meetings, e.g. National Fishworkers Forum Women in Fisheries meeting in Kerala, India, in December 2015, and the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in April 2016.
 - Enhance their own knowledge of the SSF Guidelines and regional SSF issues by consulting relevant reports and websites, e.g. FAO www.fao.org, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) www.icsf.net and the BOBLME project www.boblme.org.
 - Advocate for the establishment of a regional oversight committee with at least one government and one CSO member per country (with due attention to gender balance) to follow up and monitor (e.g. through email group), potentially building on existing initiatives (e.g. Asia Alliance on Small-Scale Fisheries).
- *Government workshop participants* should report back to their relevant ministries/departments on workshop outcomes and promote incorporation of recommendations into existing national action plans and ongoing national planning processes (e.g. building on the NPOA experience from Indonesia); moreover they should advocate for relevant actions, including post-harvest related capacity development, improvement of infrastructure facilities, development of fisherwomen societies, and secure budget allocations.
- *Governments* should establish SSF focal points in their fisheries administrations and other authorities, as appropriate, and organize national awareness-raising and planning workshops in collaboration with other stakeholders.
- *CSOs, with the support of governments and FAO*, should develop additional language versions of the SSF Guidelines, e.g. in Bangla (Bangladesh) and Dhivehi (Maldives). The various existing and future local language versions should be disseminated widely.

- *NGOs and CBOs/CSOs, with support from governments*, should prepare posters, simplified versions, short movies and radio features to raise awareness about the SSF Guidelines
- *CSOs* should appoint national focal points for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.
- *Transparency International Sri Lanka* should disseminate information on the SSF Guidelines in monthly meetings and support the drafting of a National Plan of Action.
- *The WorldFish Center* should check their ongoing intervention priorities against the issues identified during the workshop to support SSF Guidelines implementation, including support to the Bangladeshi government's initiatives on SSF Guidelines implementation and relevant research.
- The *Sustainable Fisheries Partnership* will seek to incorporate SSF Guidelines issues identified during the workshop into their Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs) in the region and seek partners to assist in addressing these.
- *Research institutes and universities* should:
 - contribute a chapter on the SSF Guidelines implementation to a planned publication of the research network Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) (case study on Bangladesh);
 - look into new research areas relevant to the application of the SSF Guidelines, including socio-economic data collection design and implementation (including gender-disaggregated data);
 - provide information in collaboration with fishing communities (participatory research) on socio-economic conditions and aquatic habitat to inform policy and management decisions;
 - integrate the SSF Guidelines into fisheries course curricula (e.g. *Sylhet Agriculture University of Bangladesh* in its fisheries course on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries).

The need to identify and secure funding and synergies was acknowledged by all stakeholders. This should include engagement with international and regional development partners — including through bilateral donors and embassies at the country level — and with new projects (including BOBLME phase 2). Opportunities with NGOs operating outside fisheries and working with human rights and social development should be explored.

At the national level, 2016 budget allocations should be used as much as possible and proposals for following budget years should be submitted. Interaction with the relevant non-fisheries ministries and departments at all levels, as well as the mainstreaming of the SSF Guidelines into relevant policies, strategies and plans, should be encouraged as along with public—private partnerships in support of the SSF Guidelines.

CLOSING SESSION

Nicole Franz, FAO, congratulated workshop participants on their hard work and the productive outcomes of the workshop. She assured them that FAO stands ready to support the South Asian countries in implementing the SSF Guidelines. She thanked the Ministry, BOBLME and the FAO Representation for their support to the organization of the workshop.

A minute of silence was observed in memory of Chandrika Sharma, who was from this region (India) and made an important contribution to the development of the SSF Guidelines.

The workshop was closed by N. B. M. Ranatunge, Director-General (Technical) of the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development of Sri Lanka. On behalf of the Minister, he thanked all partners for organizing and financing this event.

Appendix 1 – Workshop agenda

Monday, 23 November 2015 (venue: Jubilee Hall)

08.00	Registration
09.00	Opening ceremony and welcome addresses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightning of the Ceremonial Oil Lamp • Welcome address by FAO Representative (Mr Giuseppe Bronzoni) • Address by Chief Guest (Honourable Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development) • The SSF Guidelines – towards implementation (Ms Nicole Franz, FAO)
10.00	<i>Coffee break and photo session</i>
10.30	Workshop introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of workshop objectives, expected outputs and <i>modus operandi</i> (Lena Westlund, FAO) • Designation of chairpersons
11.00	Keynote presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A CSO perspective on SSF Guidelines implementation in South Asia (Mr Herman Kumara, NAFSO) • A regional perspective: the BOBLME project and SSF Guidelines implementation (Mr Rudolf Hermes, BOBLME)
12.00	Country presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sri Lanka (TBA) • Bangladesh (Mr Gaziur Md Rahman)
12.30	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00	Country presentations – cont. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maldives (Mr Ahmed Shifaz) • India: Community preparedness for implementing the SSF Guidelines: a case of Kerala, South India (Mr Titto d’Cruz)
14.30	Introduction to working groups Session 1
14.45	Working group – Session 1
15.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
15.45	Working group – Session 1 – cont.
17.00	Closure of the day
18.30–20.30	<i>Welcome reception</i>

Tuesday, 24 November 2015 (venue: room GF6)

09.00	Brief summary of the presentations of the previous day and introduction to Day 2 (FAO)
09.15	Reporting back from Working groups - Session 1 and discussion
10.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
10.45	Additional presentations – Part 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of workshop in Indonesia: Southeast Asia experience and future plans with regard to SSF Guidelines implementation (Mr Trian Yunanda, MMAF Indonesia) • Women and small-scale fisheries in the lens of poverty eradication (Mr Muzib Mehdy, SAAPE Bangladesh)
11.30	Introduction to working groups Session 2
11.45	Working groups – Session 2
12.30	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00	Working groups – Session 2 cont.
15.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
15.45	Reporting back from Working groups - Session 2 and discussion
17.00	Closure of the day

Wednesday, 25 November 2015 (venue: room GF6)

09.00	Brief summary of the presentations of the previous day and introduction to Day 3 (FAO)
09.15	Additional presentations – Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and disaster risks (Ms Florence Poulain, FAO) • Research and small-scale fisheries in Sri Lanka (Mr Oscar Amarasinghe, University of Ruhuna)
10.00	Introduction to working groups Session 3
10.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
10.30	Working groups – Session 3
12.30	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00	Working groups – Session 3 - cont.
15.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
15.45	Reporting back from Working groups - Session 3 and discussion
17.00	Closure of the day

Thursday, 26 November 2015 (venue: room GF6)

09.00	Conclusions and way forward
10.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
10.45	Conclusions and way forward – cont.
12.00	Closing session
12.30	<i>Lunch</i>

Appendix 2 – List of participants

EXTERNAL

BANGLADESH

Md Mujibul Haque MUNIR
Fish Workers Alliance
Email: munir.coastbd@gmail.com

Md Enamul HOQ
BFRI
Email: hoq_me@yahoo.com

Mohammad Jalilur RAHMAN
Worldfish Center ECOFISH (BD) Project
Email: J.Rahman@cgiar.org

Mohammad Mahmudul ISLAM
Sylhet Agricultural University
Email: mahmud@rocketmail.com

Muzib MEHDY
SAAPE
Email: m.mehdy@gmail.com

Md. Gaziur RAHMAN
Department of Fisheries
Email: rgaziur95@yahoo.com

INDIA

Stephen BENCHAMIN
AIPP
Email: benjaminfer@gmail.com

Titto D'CRUZ
Trivandrum
Email: tittods@yahoo.com

Ilango MANICKAM
National Fishes Forum
Email: milango1955@gmail.com

Namdithiu PAMAI
AIPP
Email: pameinam@gmail.com

Shanti Ranjan BEHERA
East Coast Fish Workers' Union
Email: shanti_ranjan@rediffmail.com

INDONESIA

Syafril FAUZI
Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries
(MAFF)
Email: tryand_fish@yahoo.com

Trian YUNANDA
MAFF
Email: tryand_fish@yahoo.com

MALDIVES

Mohameed ANEEL
SAARC Maldives
Coastal Zone Management Centre
Email: manil@sczmc.org

Abdulla SHAKIR
Fishermen's Association
Email: abdullashakir@gmail.com

Ahmed SHIFAZ
Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture
Email: a.shifaz@gmail.com
ahmed.shifaz@fishagri.gov.mv

THAILAND

Rudolf HERMES
BOBLME
Email: rudolf.hermes@boblme.org

UNITED KINGDOM

Alice MILLER
International Pole and Line Association
Email: Alice.miller@ipnlf.org

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Geoff TINGLEY
Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Email: geoff.tingley@sustainablefish.org

SRI LANKA

A. ABEYGUNASEKERA
Ceylon Fishery Harbour Corporation

W. M. M. R. ADIKARI
Ministry of Fisheries

K. H. M. L. AMARALAL
National Aquatic Resource Agency
(NARA)
Email: lalith@nara.ac.lk

Oscar AMARASINGHE
University of Ruhuna
Email: oamarasinghe@yahoo.com

Nihal ATAPATTU
Canadian High Commission
Email: nihal.atapattu@international.gc.ca

S. BALASUBRAMANIAM
Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic
Resources Development

B. A. P. Kapila BAMUNUARACHCHI
Ministry of Fisheries
Email: bapkapila@gmail.com

Subashinie DEEPA KAMALANATHA
Sri Vimukthi Fisheries Women
Organization
Email: subashinidp@gmail.com

A. H. Sumana EDIRIWEERA
Department of Fisheries & Aquatic
Resources Development
Email: ahsediriweera@gmail.com

Claude FERNANDO
Ministry of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources
Development
Email: claudef@sltnet.lk

S. S. K. HAPUTHANTHRI
National Aquatic Research Agency
(NARA)

H. L. N. Sandamalee HERATH
Department of Fisheries & Aquatic
Resources
Email: hlsherath@gmail.com

N. Y. HIRIMUTHUGODA
University of Ruhuna
Email: yasho@ansci.ruh.ac.lk

Supuni INDEEWARI FERNANDO
Ministry of fisheries & Aquatic Resources
Development
Email: supuniindeewari@gmail.com

Upul JAYASOORIYA
Cey Nor Foundation Ltd.
Email: upuljayasooriyua1@gmail.com

R. A. M. JAYATHILAKA
National Aquatic Resources research &
Development Agency
Email: ramjayathilaka@yahoo.com

W. P. JAYATHILAKA PERERA
Small Fisheries Federation of Sri Lanka
Email: Jayathilaka.perera4@gmail.com

H. M. Palaittha KITHSIRI
National Aquatic Resources Research and
Development Agency

Herman KUMARA
NAFSO
Email: hermankumara@gmail.com

U. L. S. KUMUDINI
Ministry of fisheries & Aquatic Resources
Development
Email: ulskumudini4@gmail.com

H. S. W. A. LIYANAGE
National Aquaculture Development
Authority
Email: hemalliyanage@gmail.com

Jagath LIYANARACHCHI
Transparency International Sri Lanka
Email: jagath@tisrilanka.org

Vijayanathan LOGANATHAN
Norwegian Embassy
Email: Loganathan.Vijayanathan@mfa.no

S. N. Chathurika PIUMALI
Ministry of fisheries & Aquatic Resources
Development
Email: planning@gmail.com

R. H. POTHUWEILA
National Aquaculture Development
Authority
Email: ruwanpothuwila@gmail.com

Bharatha RAMANAYAKE
Small Fisheries Federation of Sri Lanka
Email: bharatha63@yahoo.com

Monty RANATUNGE
Ministry of Fisheries

Ayesh RANAWAKA
Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic
Recourses Development

Maduka SAMPATH
Southern Fisheries Organisation Matara
Email: Maduka.sampath@gmail.com

Imaya UGGALDENIYA
Ministry of Fisheries
Email: imayagangesna@yahoo.com

FAO

Giuseppe BRONZONI
FAO SRI LANKA
Email: giuseppe.bronzoni@fao.org

Tilaka DISSANAYAKE
FAO SRI LANKA
Email: tilakad1955@gmail.com

Nicole FRANZ
Fishery Planning Analyst
FAO HQ
Email: Nicole.franz@fao.org

Dihan HETTIGE
Assistant FAO Representative
(Administration)
FAO SRI LANKA
Email: dihan.hettige@fao.org

Thilina HEWAGE
FAO SRI LANKA
Email: Thilina.hewage@fao.org

Shehani MUTHUKUMARA
FAO SRI LANKA
Email: Shehani.Mutucumarana@fao.org

Florence POULAIN
Fisheries and Aquaculture Officer
FAO HQ
Email: Florence.poulain@fao.org

Lena WESTLUND
International Fisheries Consultant
FAO HQ
Email: Lena.westlund@fao.org

Appendix 3 – Working group distribution

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Group 1: Governance of Tenure in SSF and Resource Management Facilitator: Lena Westlund, FAO	Group 2: Social Development, Employment, Decent Work, and Gender Equality Facilitator: Nicole Franz, FAO	Group 3: Value Chains, Post-Harvest and Trade Facilitator: Florence Poulain, FAO
Members: Md. Gaziur Rahman R.H. Pothuweila Ilango Manickam Abdulla Shakir Herman Kumara Alice Miller Md. Enamul Hoq Trian Yununda Oscar Amarasinghe B.A.P. Kapila Bamnunuarachchi R.A.M. Jayathilaka Anil Premaratne	Members: Ahmed Shifaz Md. Mujibul Haque Munir Subashinie Deepa Titto d’Cruz Muzib Mehdy Syafril Fauzi Stephen Benjamin Imaya Uggaldeniya Chathurika Piumali Sumana Ediriweera H.S.W.A. Liyanage W.P. Jayathilaka Perera Bharatha Ramanayake	Members: H.L.N. Sadamalee Herath Shanti Ranjan Behera Maduka Sampath Mohammed Mahmudul Islam Mohamed Aneel Mohammed Jalilur Rahman Geoff Tingley Namdithiu Pamai Japagth Liyanarachchi Nihal Atapattu N.Y. Hirimuthugoda U.L.S. Kumudini Upul Jayasooriya

Appendix 4 – Final results of the working group sessions

Group 1

Issue/objective	Proposed action at regional level (by whom)	Proposed action at national level (by whom)
Participation and co-management: SSF communities will be empowered to participate & take responsibility to manage & sustain the fisheries resources/aquatic ecosystems	Joint-management platform to manage shared coastal resources between India & Sri Lanka Joint-management platform to manage shared mangrove resources between India & Bangladesh – BOBP-IGO, SAARC & BOBLME	National co-management platform (including women and marginal groups) to manage resources in Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar (India & Sri Lanka)– MoF and MoE in collaboration with CSOs & Academia Lagoon Management Committee (Sri Lanka & India) Inter-departmental collaboration (Sundarbans, Bangladesh) (???, Maldives) between Govt. agencies & NGOs Fishing Community organizations including cooperatives to be granted responsibility of co-managing fisheries resources (all countries) Capacity building on participatory management (EAFM) including legal aspects for community representatives & Fisheries Officers (all countries)
Issue/objective	Proposed action at regional level (by whom)	Proposed action at national level (by whom)
Consultations: Effective & meaningful consultations with communities	Consultation with regional bodies	Establish consultative committees at district, state & national level Regular consultative visits by policy-makers to fishing communities
Legitimate tenure rights (customary rights): Tenure rights are identified, recorded, recognized & respected	N/A- National right	Identify & document traditional tenure rights (Academia, Research & CSOs – all countries) Advocacy – CSOs & Academia Legalisation of traditional tenure rights– Govt.
Access to fishery resources and land: Secure, equitable tenure rights to fishery resources, fishing areas, dwelling places, & adjacent land	N/A- National right	Document cases & provide legal support to SSF communities threatened or affected by loss of land through other sectors– CSOs Advocacy – CSOs & Academia
Human right context: Define human rights, respected, & legally protected	Application of UNCLOS & ILO conventions in cases of transboundary & migrant SSF (MoF & MoFA/MEA) Document cases and advocacy campaign (CSOs, Academia, Research & Media)	Identify & document human right situations & violations (HRC, Academia, Research & CSOs – all countries) Advocacy – CSOs & Academia

Issue/objective	Proposed action at regional level (by whom)	Proposed action at national level (by whom)
Transboundary issues: Rights of SSF communities in transboundary areas protected through multi-tier interactive consultative processes	Request to regional bodies to assist in implementation of SSFVG –BOBP-IGO, BOBLME, IUCN-MFF, SACEP, SCZMC – MoF/ MoE (Sri Lanka: Chairman of NARA to request MoF)	N/A
Integrated holistic approaches: Cross-sectoral collaboration to address disaster risk and climate change	To be discussed.....	To be discussed.....

Group 2

Issue/objective	Proposed action at regional level (by whom)	Proposed action at national level (by whom)
6.1 Often lack of resources and capacities (human, financial) at institutional level to implement holistic approaches (e.g. EAF) →To implement holistic approach by ensuring sufficient investment in human capacity development	Need to mobilize long-term financial support for SSF (all)	BAN: Provide ID card for all fishers (GOV), also to improve access to services; community to play a role in monitoring this process IND: CBOs and Unions to dialogue with government in relation to ID card and deep sea fishing policy MAL: Management plan for reef fishery under development; data collection process started and needs to be completed, including on socio-economic conditions SRI: Planned socio-economic survey for fishing communities should be implemented (GOV) BAN: Skill development training for women and provision of start-up support (GOV, FI/Family Welfare etc. NGOs, CBOs) SRI/BAN/MAL/IND: Alternative/complementary income generating activities to be developed (GOV FI/ Youth/Family Welfare, women and child/Land; NGOs, CBOs, private sector/ tourism industry)
6.2 Insufficient human resource development		Explore ICT as means for two-way information flows of information (e.g. on price, fish stocks, socio-economic data – example from MAL) (APEX fisher organizations, GOV, private sector (seafood/IT), research)

Issue/objective	Proposed action at regional level (by whom)	Proposed action at national level (by whom)
<p>6.3 High level of vulnerability of fishing communities, aggravated by lack of reach or not needs-specific welfare schemes (e.g. insurance) Effective and efficient social welfare systems have been established and are operational</p>	<p>BAN: Promote possibility for fisherfolk to open bank account with minimum amount (like farmers) (GOV, public agriculture bank) SRI/MAL: Strengthen fishers and fishing craft insurance scheme (GOV, insurance companies, fishing communities) BAN: Explore how group life insurance for fishers can be realized (GOV, CBOs) IND: Implement integrated insurance and credit programme which exists but is not operational for fishers (GOV) IND: Improve health insurance system (GOV) SRI: Subsidized loan schemes for women from SFF and capacity development on business/organizational skills (GOV, private banks, NGOs) SRI: Explore development of free childcare facilities (fisher organizations, CBOs) MAL: Disseminate information about welfare schemes to fishing communities and GOV at all levels, in particular decentralized level (NGOs, CBOs, GOV) IND/BAN: Ensure coverage of basic needs in fishing communities (e.g. housing, sanitation, drinking water) (GOV to conduct needs assessment and provide services) (In Kerala: housing service within FI Dep) IND: Promote securing land rights for fishing communities in coastal areas</p>	
<p>6.4 Development and strengthening of fisherfolk organizations/community-based organizations needed</p> <p>Strong, effective community/fisherfolk organizations which are strengthened and empowered for responsible fisheries management</p>	<p>Need to improve relationship between governments and CBOs, fisherfolk organizations, CSOs (GOV, CBOs, CSOs, NGOs)</p> <p>Explore potential for regional collaboration of CSOs (some collaboration between India and Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and India already ongoing in relation to transboundary issues)</p> <p>Promotion of experience sharing on SSF Guidelines implementation, in particular on co-management arrangements and on monitoring at all levels (GOV, CBOs, fisherfolk organization, BOBLME)</p>	<p>MAL: Provide capacity development/technical support to establish organizations for fisherfolk (GOV, NGOs)</p> <p>Empower communities and their organizations to increase bargaining power or institute community middlemen (Cooperatives – example from India)</p>
<p>6.5 Hard work is often not compensated appropriately (more work – less income) - in particular for inland fisheries</p> <p>SSF sector provides equal opportunities and a safe and fair source of income</p>	<p>Investigate how middlemen could contribute to a fairer distribution of benefits (NGOs, GOV, private sector)</p> <p>Share experience with open auctions (from India, Sri Lanka inland fisheries) (GOV, CBOs, fisherfolk organizations)</p>	<p>MAL: Promote the use social standards in the seafood value chain (private sector, CBOs)</p> <p>IND: Improvement of marketing infrastructure (e.g. sanitary facilities) and transport possibilities (to reduce dependency on middlemen) to support role of women (GOV, cooperative societies/women's organizations)</p> <p>BAN: Explore possibility to extend minimum wage scheme also to informal sector (GOV)</p> <p>(Develop and) implement policies in support of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in fishing communities (GOV, NGOs, CBOs)</p>

Group 3

Issue/objective	Proposed action at regional level (by whom)	Proposed action at national level (by whom)
<p>Issue: Limited participation of women in value chains and 1.b. Reduced access to fish and lack of fisheries resources/capacity</p> <p>Objective: 1a. Increased percentage of female participation in fishers organizations and decision-making processes;</p> <p>1b. Increased livelihoods opportunities within the fishery value chains (e.g. not only within marine, but also inland fisheries and aquaculture) through improved access to financial resources and/or institutional arrangements (e.g. long distance);</p> <p>1b. OR outside the sector through skills development.</p>	<p>Set up network for exchange of good practices;</p> <p>Good practices replicated</p>	<p>Strengthen/Set up women's cooperatives/societies at subnational levels and federate the latter at national level in cooperation with government or independently (how? Who? Awareness-raising and technical support programmes – partnership programmes, government schemes etc.) [India/SL];</p> <p>Increase women participation in fisheries activities and Hilsa conservation groups by or to at least 30% [BDG] (projects);</p> <p>Microfinance assistance to go to women [BDG/SL] for income-generating activities (banks, NGOs) + community savings systems (THRIFT, self-help groups).</p> <p>Women to have access to existing social protection programmes.</p> <p>Skills development for women for entrepreneurship and marketing</p>
<p>2. Unfair distribution of benefits (no fair price) from trade to fishers (due to seasonal fish dumping or to persistent unfair distribution in normal trade)</p> <p>Objective: Provide a minimum level of income for SSF through appropriate measures and policies; sustain SSF livelihoods</p>	<p>Regional understanding not to disturb local demand and supply systems (by governments) /</p> <p>Regional trade policy coherence</p>	<p>Policies to regulate supply and demand through government (SL), producers' organizations, private sector (IND, BDG).</p> <p>Fishers' organizations to negotiate on behalf of fishers with buyers</p> <p>Information on market price through mobile applications/ technology (by cooperatives)</p> <p>Free bondage from middleman through low interest credit support</p>
<p>3. Poor or non-existent post-harvest infrastructures, technology, capacity to access markets for SSF</p> <p>Objective: -Catch less, earn more.</p> <p>Enable investment in post-harvest infrastructures and appropriate technology; Provide capacity building;</p> <p>Strengthen fishers' organizations to enable fisherfolk (men and women) to have a voice.</p> <p>Capacity building of producers' organizations and introducing cooperative systems; shorten the value chain (from the producer to the consumer or exporter); develop transportation;</p>	<p>Exposure/exchange of experiences</p>	<p>Starting point: SSF to define what they need to inform planning processes.</p> <p>Fishing cooperatives to buy production means to reduce fishing input costs.</p> <p>Better return for the produce through support to infrastructures, processing technology, capacity building to improve post-harvest and access to market (government or fishing cooperatives)</p>
<p>4. Safety at sea in fishing and subsequent impacts on the value chain (storms, bad weather + sea piracy in some cases/ BGD) Objectives: improved security, safety at sea</p>		<p>Awareness-raising, Provision of safety equipment</p> <p>Training in safety at sea, Insurance schemes.</p> <p>Improve security through patrolling (piracy).</p> <p>Improve communication/credibility of early warning systems</p> <p>Cyclone shelter (government)</p>

Towards the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in South Asia

Proceedings of the South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication

23–26 November 2015
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Following the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in June 2014, and in line with paragraph 13.6 of the document itself referring to promoting the development of regional plans of action, a regional workshop was held in South Asia to discuss the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

The South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 23 to 26 November 2015. It was organized by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department in partnership with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of Sri Lanka, with financial support from the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project and the Government of Norway. The workshop was attended by a total of 49 participants from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Maldives and Sri Lanka, including representatives of governments, regional and international organizations, fisherfolk organizations, civil society organization (CSOs), NGOs, academia and other relevant actors, as well as FAO staff and resource persons.

The overall objective of the workshop was to raise awareness and support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the region. The workshop noted that small-scale fisheries contribute to livelihoods, food security, and local and regional economies across the region. There are encouraging developments in the region concerning legal reforms, strengthening participation of small-scale fisheries actors and co-management approaches. On the other hand, many challenges persist, including heavily exploited fishery resources in coastal areas, poor infrastructure facilities and services, increased risks from disasters and climate change, competition from other sectors, and the insufficient operationalization of fisheries management plans and institutionalization of the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) in national fisheries governance frameworks. There is therefore a strong need to move from theory to practice and to link policy to actions, in the spirit of the SSF Guidelines.

